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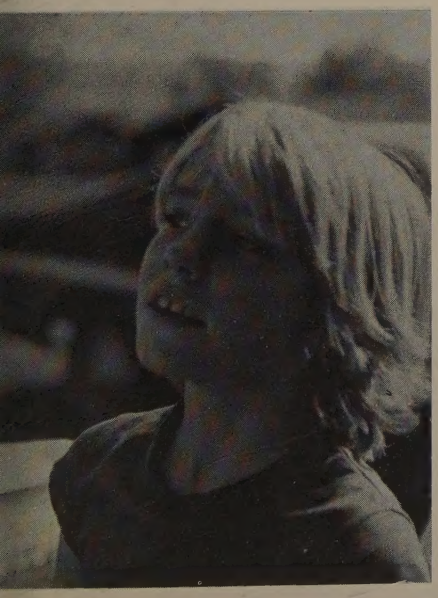

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CHIARA LUBICH ANSWERS

Let your life speak

Question: Within me, the choice of the cross is not yet total, it is superficial. What can I do?

The choice of suffering repels our nature. For this reason you must always begin again with courage reflecting that you have not chosen the cross, you have chosen Jesus crucified. And Jesus is always amiable. Look for him in every suffering and it will be easier for you to welcome him and share with him something of his passion. Indeed we Christians must continue in ourselves the passion of Jesus, because he has made us worthy, in him, through him and with him, to collaborate in his work for the salvation of mankind. But always begin again. To take up your cross is the necessary condition for following Jesus, also in his glory. Furthermore...love for Jesus crucified brings such a deep and intimate union with God! The cross is the surest way towards this union.

Question: At work I find myself split in two by the work to be done and the brothers around me to be loved. I do not know how to reconcile the two. Isn't it enough to do my duty?

What matters is to do the will of God. It is clear that during working hours you must do your work with all possible involvement. It may happen — as you say — that during work God puts you near a brother who needs to be loved. Then give him, if it is opportune, a good welcome, a polite greeting in which you put all of yourself; and if you know that he does not like these sort of things, direct a thought to God for that person and go on working. This way of behaving will not be fruitless; in time it will bear fruit.

◎

Question: Many people I find myself with treat religion as though it were unimportant. They do not reject it, they are just not interested. They say it is something that has no place in practical life. The question of whether there is another life after this one is alien to their thoughts which are all concerned with minor everyday affairs. They recognize, however, in moments of sincerity that life is something which gives few satisfactions and has little meaning. The contradiction is puzzling. Yet I find it difficult to show them the great importance of religion in our everyday life. They cannot grasp this. What should I do?

There is no alternative left for you than showing with your life that for you religion is the most important thing.

Do not argue, but love. Make yourself one with everyone, also in their doubts or in their contradictions, without forcing them to think the same way as you do.

Remain firm in your faith and in your way of life, in which you must be consistent, remaining faithful to your prayer life which must always be preceded by love. If you are asked to take part in discussions, speak when you are certain that what you say is understood, otherwise conclude with a smile, which always expresses esteem for the others, but which makes you obedient to the Gospel which tells us to always be in the truth. If you see the minimum of interest speak with discretion, always leaving in the other person the desire to know more. Basically let your life speak more than your words.

◎

Question: The sacrament of reconciliation weighs me down. Teach me a new way...a way of joy.

The idea of confession weighs you down. Well then, think about it in this way, "In the confessional, in the priest, Jesus is present. I must go to love him. I must always love, I must love everybody."

Jesus is there, and he is infinite mercy, he who has paid for all the sins of the world. Believe it, he is very happy that his blood does not go to waste.

Go then to make a gift of your sins to Jesus, and if they are serious, remember that in paradise there is greater joy for the lost sheep than for the ninety-nine sheep who stayed in the fold.

Of course this does not mean that you must take sins lightly thinking of the celebrations in heaven...Bear in mind all the other conditions for a good confession: careful preparation, sincere sorrow, a definite promise not to commit those sins again. Then carry out the penance which the priest gives you.

It is also God's will to take good care of that precious possession which is our health.

◎

Question: A priest told me that it is not possible to always live in the will of God and that this commitment should not cause injury to my health. You, however say that we should do the will of God in every moment. I have experienced that we are made free by doing the will of God. But there is the phrase "He who listens to you, listens to me. . ."

Perhaps the priest noticed in you a commitment to follow the will of God only in certain aspects of life, like studying, working, praying, serving others, etc. But we all know that it is also God's will to take good care of that precious possession which is our health. In order to do so, we must live other expressions of the will of God which are no less important than the ones already mentioned. For instance, we must get the sleep we need, we must exercise and take part in some sport, we should dedicate some days each month to our health, and go for walks or go climbing, etc. Some healthy recreation, some good laughter, relaxes our nerves and allows us to give our full attention when we are involved in other activities.

If you do this I think you will be able to keep up your commitment to always do the will of God wherever you are. There must be a way of doing this if God himself commanded it, "Not he who says 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of Heaven but whoever does the will of my Father" (Mt. 7:21).

WORD OF LIFE

Do you remember? These were the words Jesus addressed to the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane. These words give sense to his passion which was followed by his resurrection. They express, in all its intensity, the drama unfolding within Jesus. It is the interior laceration provoked by the profound revulsion of his human nature before the presence of a death wanted by his Father.

Christ, however, did not wait for that day to conform his will to that of God. He had done it all his life.

If this has been the conduct of Christ, this ought to be the attitude of every Christian. Also, with your life, you should repeat: "Not my will but yours be done."

Perhaps you never thought of it, even if you were baptized and are a churchgoer.

Perhaps you might have used this sentence as an expression of resignation — something one does when he has no choice. This, however, is not its real interpretation.

Listen: in life you can go in one of two directions. You can do your own will, or you can freely choose to do God's will. In the former, you will soon experience disappointment by attempting to climb the mountain of life using your limited ideas, your resources, your dreams, your own strength. All this, sooner or later, will transform your life into an experience of boredom, inconclusiveness, dullness and, at times, despair.

Your existence will be colorless in spite of your efforts to make it interesting; despite everything, the deepest part of you will not be at peace. Admit it, you cannot deny it.

Furthermore, at the end of your life, you will depart without leaving a trace. — only a few tears and then, inexorable, total oblivion.

If, instead, you do the Will of God, you will re-live Jesus' words: "Not my will but yours be done."

Let us imagine God like the sun. A ray from the sun falls on each one of us. That is the divine will for me, for you, for everyone.

Christians and all men of good will are called to move always towards the sun, keeping to their own ray of light which is unique and distinct from all the others. By doing so, they will fulfill the wonderful and particular plan that God has for them.

If you too want to do it, you will find yourself involved in a divine adventure of which you never dreamed.

You will be, at the same time, both actor and spectator of something great which God is accomplishing in you and through you in humanity.

All that will happen to you -- suffering and joy, graces and disgraces, significant events (good fortune or loss of those who are dear to you) as well as insignificant events (one's work at home, or at school) — will all acquire a new meaning since it has been offered to you by God who is love.

Everything that he wills or permits is for our good. At first, you will accept it in faith and later you will actually experience that there is a golden thread connecting all events and forming a beautiful embroidery — it is the plan of God for you.

Maybe this prospect is attractive to you. Maybe you sincerely want to give a deeper meaning to your life. Listen then, first of all I will tell you when to do the will of God. Just think for a moment: the past is gone and you cannot run after it; you can only leave it to God's mercy. The future is not here yet — you will live it when it becomes the present. Only the present is in your hands. In the present, you have to live the words: "Not my will but yours be done."

When travelling by train — and life is also a journey — you usually remain in your seat. It wouldn't come to your mind to move back and forth to save time. But this is what we do if we live our life dreaming of a future which is not yet here, or thinking of a past which will never return.

No, time moves forward on its own. We must remain rooted in the present and then we will reach the fulfillment of our life here.

You will now ask me: how do I distinguish God's will from mine? It is not difficult to distinguish God's will from our own if we remain in the present. I will tell you one way to do it. God speaks within you. Perhaps in the past, his voice has too often been suffocated by you and is now barely audible. But try to listen, God speaks to you. He tells you when it is the moment to study, when it is the moment to help a friend in need, when to work, when to overcome a temptation or to fulfill one of your duties as a Christian or as a citizen.

The voice of God within you urges you to listen to those who speak to you in his name; it helps you face difficult situations courageously...

Don't silence this voice — it's the most precious treasure you possess. Follow it.

You will then build, moment by moment, the story of your life which is both human and divine because it is made by you in collaboration with God. And you will see wonders.

You will see what God can work in people who say with all their lives, "Not my will but yours be done."

Chiara Lubich

EXPERIENCES

Each month a "Word of Life" appears in Living City or in its Supplement. The following are experiences that some of our readers shared with us in living the Word of Life.

It was about 7 a.m. and we were just eturning from mass. Many things were oing through my mind as I was trying o plan the next half hour. This is usual- y a very busy time at our house because t is the moment when my husband and our two older sons are preparing to eave for school and work. There are unches to make, breakfast to prepare nd so on. All these things were going hrough my mind as we neared our ome when something in front of our ouse caught my eye. I could not see learly because we were still a block way from home, but I sensed something vas wrong. It looked like all the children were outside with my next door neigh- or. I caught my breath and turned to ny husband and said, "Please hurry."

When we finally arrived, I saw my ext door neighbor in her robe with lood streaming down both her arms nd all the children around her. I realized mmediately what had happened. Her log, which has not been on friendly erms with our dog for over a year, had ome over to our door and our dog ttacked the little dog. Our neighbor earing the commotion ran over to help er dog, screaming for someone to come ut of our house and get our dog away. When our oldest son saw what was hap- ening he did not know what to do, ince he was afraid to go near the dogs. n the hopes of saving her dog, our eighbor tried to pull them apart. Our log, in anger, bit her several places on er hands and arms. At that moment ve arrived. I could see immediately from er face (she was white as a ghost and haking all over) that she was not only n pain but also very angry at us. I im- nediately went over to see how badly he was hurt and automatically I told er I was sorry for what had happened. She quickly turned around and without aying a word walked away toward her ouse. I realized how shook-up I was, nd, without thinking too much, I started to go into our house. Then I thought, "I can't let it pass like this." I had just been to mass and had just received Jesus, and with great love for him I had told him that I was ready to give my life for my brothers, as he had done for me and to love them as I would want to be loved. Now I was failing to see him in my next door neighbor. Before she had a chance to reach her door, I ran over to her and I told her how sorry we all were for what had happened. I asked her to please let us know if she needed a ride to the emergency room, or if she needed any help. Her face was like stone, and looking at her for a moment I felt a sense of hopelessness. It was hard to know whether she really believed I was sorry. All I could do now was go and prepare breakfast for the family.

After all the children went to school and my husband off to work, I sat down for a moment and started thinking of the whole situation. I knew within me what I had to do. I knew I had to go over to see my neighbor right away and ask how she was doing, offering my help and my love. Inside, however, there was a certain fear. I guess it was a fear that she would not welcome my help. Also, I thought she may not answer the door. Then what would I do? All these fears, the shyness that I thought had disappeared seemed to come to the surface. All of a sudden I thought of Jesus whom I had just received a few hours before. So I said to him, "You know how weak I am, how difficult it is for me to do this. Please take over for me, you are my strength, my courage, my all, without you I can't do it." After a moment I felt such a peace and a joy in my soul and with it such a feeling of love! Suddenly it didn't matter what I thought or what I felt. It seemed as if all had disappeared and only love for Jesus had remained.

As I was preparing to leave the house, the door bell rang. To my surprise, when I opened the door, I saw my next door neighbor standing with a cup of coffee in her hands. I could see she was trying to smile, and I smiled back. We sat and talked for a few minutes. Then she left. For me, it was a joyful moment. I silently thanked God over and over again during the whole day.

R. B.

One day a repair man came to fix my sewing machine. It was a day crowded with many things to get done. The man was late and I had to rearrange my schedule to fit his. I remembered the word of life, "Love your enemies. . ." Instead of greeting him at the door with a sour face, I welcomed him into my home with a smile. As he repaired the machine, I decided to get my work done, but I could see he wanted to talk. He was friendly, but friendliness was far away from my mind, cleanliness was foremost to me. I was torn between two goods. I decided to remain and listen to the repairman. I could have stood up while listening to him, hoping that that position would convey — I'm busy, let's go, but I decided to go all the way and love to the end, I forced myself to sit down and patiently listen to him with all my attention. God is never outdone in generosity. Before I knew what happened I was caught up in a beautiful exchange on my favorite topic — God's love. I could have missed an opportunity to love in that moment, but instead I met Jesus in this stranger.

C. V.

My daughter-in-law came from out of town to visit with us for a couple of weeks, bringing our grandchildren. During her stay, she had the habit of putting the babies' dirty diapers in the garbage disposal in the kitchen, causing an unpleasant odor. I asked her nicely once or twice if she would mind putting them in a plastic bag, and bringing them to the garbage disposal in the basement where it was cooler, to no avail. She continued to put them in the kitchen. Remembering the word of life, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hurt you," I knew I had to be the first to love, and do it for Jesus. So without embarrassing her, I kept removing them myself from the kitchen and bringing them to the basement, thus eliminating what could have been an unpleasant situation. I continued to love Jesus in her, and tried to make the rest of her stay a more happy one.

I. S.

My day began with many errands and chores to be done. I remembered that a cake was needed for my son's school fair, and I was tempted to buy one. In my heart though, I knew I had been asked to bake, and I knew that in order to love I had to make the time. I decided to bake the cake and even put a special topping on it. My son was delighted with the extra effort. I could see he was worried about spoiling the cake if he took it on the bus. I saw an opportunity to love Jesus in him, and offered to take it to the school myself, adding it to the list of stops for the day.

The day went on and each stop I made and each person I met I tried to love by putting aside my ideas of how quickly I wanted to get things done. Each time impatience would creep in at the thought of the time being wasted (something I ordinarily cannot tolerate) I stopped and thought of the words of the Gospel, "Remain in me." The impatience then would disappear and allow me to love immediately. The chores of the day became opportunities to love God and serve my brothers.

C. V.

My job often consists of shipping and receiving packages from foreign countries into our office. The usual procedure is that I write down the contents that arrive and the waybill number in a small book and, alongside of this, the date the material arrived.

All this information is usually given to me by a co-worker and then I return all the contents to him. One day about two months ago I received the contents of a package without an ID number. Apparently when the package was opened the number got ripped off the paper. So I logged the information and the date. Several weeks later a bill came in with a number on it and since its contents corresponded with what was in the numberless package I checked the bill as valid and closed the case. Two weeks ago one of the secretaries from accounting came over with the weekly bills. This time there was a waybill that I had no number for and, in checking back, its contents also matched the contents of the original package. She asked me what the first number had been and I checked. Since it had never happened before I explained that I had not written it down. She started yelling at the top of her voice. "How could you be so incompetent." "This is company money. Do you always treat other peoples' money so carelessly?" and so on. This went on for about ten minutes. The word of life came to my mind. Here was my "enemy." I remained silent and afterwards I said that I was sorry that I had made a mistake. At this she retorted, "I hope you can understand what I was telling you!" At this point I almost let go. I could feel my face getting red. But this suffering I could use. I could use it to love her. I told her that I did understand.

Later, when I came back to my desk, I noticed that there was a piece of chocolate there. When I asked where it came from, I discovered that the receptionist had put it there. She had heard everything the other secretary had said. She said, "I guess you need this." She really wanted to love, but in that moment I realized that to love my "enemy" meant that I could not let the receptionist go home thinking badly of the other girl. I told her that certainly the other must have had a bad day; so many people come in and disturb her. I added that she is relatively new and sometimes the others give her a hard time. Then the weather has been so miserable. I could see that little by little, the receptionist began to see things differently, too.

Just before going home I met my "friend" at the photocopy machine. I smiled and said, "Hi." She seemed a little uncomfortable. Then she said, "I hope you understand." But the tone of her voice was completely different. I assured her I did. I could see that something changed in her, that there was no residue of hard feelings but only the desire to be understood. And what is more, there was no residue of hard feelings in me, only peace.

G. L.

I clean in a hospital, and go into the patients' rooms to clean. I make every effort to love each person I come in contact with. Well, I had the experience the other day of coming into the room of an acquaintance of mine. She's a woman pampered by her husband and one who makes a career out of hospital stays. Well, when I came in to clean she started giving me a blow-by-blow description of every ache and pain and what this one and that one said. I found it harder and harder to love her as I judged her to have imaginary pains. It was only when I went into the next room that the word of life dawned on me. I was asking God to increase my love, and make me love the other and the whole human race — but I wasn't loving this woman. I was being selective. I began anew to love and when she cornered me in the hallway and proceeded to enlarge still more on her predicament I was able to love her with the increased love the Lord had given me. And as I came upon all different types of people I realized that it didn't matter if they were easy to love; my part was to love them. And what freedom to know that my human love was inadequate, but if I emptied myself I could let God's boundless Love love them. Such joy !

K. H.

Not long ago, my son graduated from college, and I invited some relatives to the house for a small get together. Everyone came but a brother-in-law and a sister-in-law whom I really expected to come. I felt hurt to think they didn't come, and I was all set to have a few words with them when Living City arrived and I read the word of life. Then I thought, "What if something came up and I was invited somewhere and couldn't go for some reason or another, I wouldn't want them to tell me off." "So always treat others as you would like them to treat you." The next day I had the opportunity to do just that, and I felt a great joy and freedom because I had been able to live the word of life and to love.

B. P.

by Sharry Silvi

A HUNDRED TIMES OVER

When I realized that my calling was one of "leaving father, mother and possessions" also physically, I packed my things and asked to join the Focolare as a "focolarina" (1).

Naturally, with the "possessions" I left also the dreams of my adventurous nature, the thirst for travelling and seeing the world and meeting all people of all nations. I was not surprised, therefore, when the community I moved into was a few blocks from home and the same bus picked me up every morning to go to the same office. It was on the bus that every once in a while an idea would creep in, as a remnant of my old plans, or images of countries I thought I would never see, flashed through my mind. Every time I would chase these thoughts away. I wanted to give all, every dream and every thought!

Very shortly afterwards God gave me back my lost travelling a hundred times over. It was not too long after I entered the "focolare" that I came to North America and ever since then I have been travelling. I have seen many cities and much beauty. This travelling is very different, however, from what I had once envisioned. I don't go in order to tour new cities or admire attractive landscapes. I go to visit people and reinforce the net of love and unity that this spirituality of life has built around the country. It is much more beautiful and as an added gift I have come to see a great part of this country - from the South to the North, from the East to the West.

The first trip was to Detroit. I remember the smiling face of Fr. Francis at the Greyhound bus terminal. He was one of the few people who at that time shared this ideal of life. During that trip Giovanna and I (we were the only two focolarine here) visited Canada. I remember the problem with Giovanna's passport. I prayed in the car for a long time on the U.S. side of the border while she remained on the Canadian side.

The route New York - Chicago - New York by bus later became a very familiar thing. I knew by heart every place the bus stopped at. I enjoyed looking out of the window especially during the night. I thought of all the people in the houses by the road. I would have liked to meet them all. I searched for steeples in the darkness and wondered: would the Eucharist be preserved in that Church? Or this one perhaps! I would say, "I greet you, Jesus, if you are there, and entrust all these people to you."

When we were two, travelling would be lighter. At times on the way to Chicago we would stop in Pittsburgh and visit friends. I can still see the Benedictine monks in their long black robes at St. Vincent College in Latrobe waving good-bye in the snow.

As the Movement spread more widely it became impossible to go everywhere by bus. We had to travel by plane. Something struck me when I began to fly often. It was to see how, with a quick

"God gave me back my lost travelling a hundred times over. . . This travelling is very different, however, from what I had once envisioned. I don't go in order to tour new cities or admire attractive landscapes. I go to visit people and reinforce the net of love and unity that this spirituality of life has built around the country."
Right: Some members of the Focolare Movement sharing their experiences at a meeting in Calgary, Alberta.
Below: A group of Gen (the New Generation of the Focolare Movement) in Chicago.

"I wondered how the Prairie would look now, silent, still and in bloom. My mind wandered back trying to recapture the solemn moment I had lived there. And then suddenly I found it in my soul; it had always been there."
Opposite page: Top: The Prairie
Below: New York

forceful start, the plane goes through the clouds and always finds the sun on the other side. It made me think of a soul faithful to Jesus Crucified and Forsaken. Suffering is so often present in our life, like the clouds in the sky. If I embrace it quickly, I told myself, and love it, loving in it Jesus who experienced all nuances of suffering for me, it becomes love. But I have to do it quickly, like the jet through the clouds, and jump into the next present moment. Then, like the jet above the clouds, I also would always find the sun.

Another thing that helps me when I fly is bad weather. In this sense: when the plane begins to shake, or goes from one air-pocket to the other, or when I see lightning all around me, it is spontaneous to be scared and to make a final examination of conscience. I have looked at my life many times in these years of travelling. What I have accomplished seems to be so little! These are the moments when I wish I were a saint and very close to God. These are the moments when I have a big "Yes" to say, facing my own failures! But this too is suffering and I can love it and find Jesus who experienced an immense sense of failure when he cried "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me." And with an act of love I prepare myself for God's infinite mercy. Usually at this point the plane lands and at the gate the bumpy trip is forgotten as I meet my friends eagerly waiting for news. But the act of love, I hope, will remain.

It would be too long to mention every trip. Each one carried its own beauty. On the first trip to North Carolina we had the joyful surprise to see the Catholic Bishop at the airport. At a later time and in a different city, the smiling face of the Episcopal Bishop of North Carolina was the first thing we saw after landing. A few years later a small ecumenical mini-Mariapolis (2) was held there.

The first time I had the impression of embracing the whole continent with my eyes, however, was when I went from New York to Toronto, from there to Vancouver, B.C., then down the coast to Los Angeles and back. The weather was clear, and you could see every little detail of the landscape, both going and coming back.

I will never forget Vancouver in bloom as the Rockies were still covered with snow. We had many meetings there and travelled from house to house repeating over and over, without getting tired, the origins of the Focolare.

In Reno, as the bright lights of the city were sparkling and the long shadows of the Sierra Nevada were gaining ground at dusk, we shared experiences on the word of life with our friends, and news of the family scattered all over the world.

In Texas the welcome was worthy of its name. How many trips we took there before opening the Focolare Center! The one which stands out most in my mind was a journey into the "Valley" from San Antonio to the Mexican border. I was travelling with a Sister and a lovely Jewish lady. For hours you could see nothing but grass as we were riding along large ranches. In one of them we had a meeting with many people who listened with great attention to the story of Chiara Lubich and her first companions during the war. In the room, a fountain was springing up water and its bubbling sounded almost like a musical

ckground. At another ranch, the Oblate thers had, at that time, their novitiate. was a very windy day and we forced our ay to a little chapel where Mass was said r the Focolare. I remember the shining ce of that priest, and the unity, which at day seemed almost tangible.

But it was this year that for the first me I saw the Prairie. I had promised, case I flew over it, that I would stop Saskatoon. When we left the little rport and began to ride toward Bruno, skatchewan, I realized that I had never en anything like what was in front of e. The Prairie was undulated, and emed infinite under the sun. We drove r over an hour almost in silence. Silence as the element that seemed to envelope erything. Here and there some patches ice appeared along the road. I thought the Indians, and what the Prairie ust have been for them. Buffalo must ve roamed here one day. In the r there was a chill that made me ink, with a longing, of the Northwest erritories, still so far away. With the rsulines, at their Academy, I found the irit of St. Angela Merici, the foundress. ne students, the Sisters, all offered the ndest hospitality; the atmosphere was ne of love. At night, an April snowstorm ansformed the landscape again. The airie was white, the following day, un- r the morning sun. The crocuses forced eir way through the snow and dotted e land here and there. The air was cool hen we left for the Saskatoon airport gain. I let that silence, that endless vas- tude, that solitude, envelope my soul ith a sense of peace, of freedom, of mag- tude which brought me closer to God.

In a few hours we were back in New ork. "Millions of people," I thought, the city suddenly appeared before my es. You could see almost every build- g in Manhattan as the plane slowly de- nded into the airport. How many there ed a life of alienation, loneliness, des- ir... This was my place. I let go of the ent magnitude of the Prairie. I plunged to the moment lying before me.

Time went by. Then some weeks ago, I was waiting for the traffic light to ange, a thought flashed through my ind. "It is May, and the Saskatchewan ies must be in bloom." They are ange, they told me, and very pretty. wondered how the Prairie would look w, silent, still and in bloom. My mind andered back trying to recapture the lemn moment I had lived there. And en suddenly I found it in my soul; it d always been there. It was a second. nen the light changed and I moved nward with the traffic. ●

Photo: United Nations

) Men and women, single and married, who ve totally consecrated their lives to realize rist's last will, "That all may be one."

) A mini-Mariapolis is a day long gathering the Focolare Movement.

I HAVE SAID MY «YES»

by Siegfried Hitzler

Joel will not be with us for the Mariapolis this year. Or rather, I should say that this year Joel will be more present than ever, because he is now in the "Heavenly Mariapolis." Those who have participated in the summer gatherings of the last several years will remember his smiling face at the New City Press booth, always ready to listen or to serve. He looked upon Living City and the books of New City Press as an indispensable means of conveying the spirituality of the Focolare, through which he himself had found new life nine years ago. Consequently, he often passed his own copies onto interested friends.

Born in Brooklyn in 1944, of hard-working parents, Joel was the second of four brothers. A conscientious student, he went onto college and graduated in electrical engineering, later moving to Waltham, near Boston. As a youth he lost interest in religion; but at twenty-five he heard a talk given by Billy Graham on TV, and was deeply struck. He decided to become a Christian and in January, 1969, he was baptized into the Catholic Church. Ten months later he met the Focolare to whose spirituality he was deeply attracted. He was faithful to the practice of living the "word of life" and found in it always new possibilities to grow in his life as a Christian.

As he was to say in May 1977, "During these eight years, I have tried to live the Gospel, to put it into practice; and even when I failed I tried to go ahead." Jesus' words, "Whatever you do to the least of my brothers you do to me," had struck him deeply. With generosity and perseverance, he soon became involved in the service of those less fortunate than he. He used to serve as a driver for cancer patients who were going for chemotherapy treatments and with others from the Legion of Mary he went faithfully every week to visit the sick at Metropolitan State Hospital in Waltham. In many other ways through his unselfish giving of his time, his car and his money, he showed his love for Christ and helped many to experience Christ's love for them.

By trying to live this life of the Gospel with others who shared his ideals and trying to assure the presence of Christ among them by being united in his name, Joel wanted to do his part toward giving that witness of love and unity by which Jesus had said that the world would believe. In time, he felt God calling him to a deeper commitment within the Focolare Movement. He became a "volunteer," (1) giving of himself even more fully to the cause of unity.

In August 1976, it was discovered that Joel had inoperable cancer. I will let him describe this experience in his own words, as he did at the Boston mini-Mariapolis (2) on May 1, 1977: "I didn't want to worry my family, so the first person I called was Siegfried of the Boston Focolare to share this in unity with him. He came to the hospital every day. Many others did too. This was a big help for me, and everything went well because of the unity and Jesus in our midst. Otherwise, it could really have been a pretty sad situation, you know, just worrying about it. But with those who were with me, and with those who happened to be at home or at work, we would make a little pact to have Jesus among us. And so I could have Jesus with me always, and that was really consoling.

"Then I found out that I definitely had cancer. That's a bit of a lonely feeling because it's a personal thing, but I never had any fear, I was never worried. I never asked, 'Why me?' 'Why did it have to be me?' — it never came to my mind. Through trying, and through the grace of God, I was able to say, 'Why not me?' There is no real reason why it shouldn't be me; I was actually happy that it was me. I am not like the others who have responsibilities for their families. I am single.

"I also thought how beautiful it was. I could say to myself, 'I am thirty-three years old, and I am too young to die.' But I thought of Jesus. He was thirty-three years old when he died on the cross. And so, even in the hospital, knowing I had cancer, I knew enough to say this to myself and to love this suffering. Some people think of dying as the final thing, the end. I knew that this was not the end. We know dying is only the beginning. Thinking back, if I had not come back to God, I would have really been in a mess. But God knew what was coming, and he prepared the way for me and chose me. This shows his infinite love and mercy. I actually felt peaceful and experienced a strong unity with the others during the Mass, especially at the consecration. It is always very interesting how God stays very close to us. He is always there; he never goes away.

"When I left the hospital, I wrote to Chiara (3), just to offer up my little suffering for the Focolare Movement in North America. She wrote back, telling me to live each present moment with solemnity, for God alone. This made a big difference to me; I now try not to let any present moment slip by. But sometimes you fail and you say things you really don't want to say, and you make light of things you shouldn't make light of. So I really have to live each present moment for God. Now I am totally in his hands."

During the early months of 1977, it emed that the cancer might be receding, and there was some hope for his covery. However, Joel maintained an titude of serenity and complete readess to do God's will and not his own. o he was ready when, with the summer, me signs that the cancer was spreading, d the minor discomfort he had so far perienced began to give way to frelent pain. In spite of this, he continued participate actively in the life of the ovement in Boston, and was once ain on hand to help at the Mariapolis August.

By the end of the summer he began lose weight, and his strength rapidly minished. By October, he was almost mpletely confined to his bed. He egan to realize that his hour was drawg closer, and on October 25, he wrote hiara again: ". . .Recently I have taken turn for the worse, and the physical ffering increased to the point that I ave asked God, 'Why?' But I remembered my promise to offer up this sufring, remembering Jesus Forsaken (4). has been consoling to think of my ffering in this way. I would like to ank you for your prayers and your xample. . . I was moved when I found ut that you were praying for me. It ade me feel that I was even more a rt of your family. . . United with you Jesus Forsaken."

The presence of Jesus in the Euchist, which was the theme of the 1977 ariapolis, and has been the focal point the Movement's life during the past ear, was a great source of strength to oel. His encounter with Jesus in the ucharist became the high point of each ay.

Throughout this period, we tried to eate an almost constant atmosphere of eace around him remaining in unity so at Jesus could be in our midst. In this mosphere, each day he found the rength to renew his "yes" to God.

In the meantime, he had informed s family of the gravity of his illness. is parents and other family members equently visited and assisted him, drivg up each day from New York.

Saturday, December 3rd, after reiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation, e Sacrament of the Sick and the ucharist, Joel entered the hospital for hat was to be his final visit. He was to ceive chemotherapy treatments in a st effort to stop the spread of the alignancy. However, that morning he d already experienced great difficulty breathing, and had to be rushed to e hospital ahead of time. He was given xygen and a tube was inserted in his ose to facilitate his breathing. In the ening, he confided to one of his friends: "This is the beginning of the end." Nevertheless, he reiterated his "yes" to Jesus Forsaken.

"I have tried to live the Gospel and even when I failed, I tried to go ahead."

Sunday, he was feeling somewhat better and was able to eat; he had many visitors and confided to one of them, "I have said my 'yes'."

Monday was a difficult day. The doctor removed some built-up fluid in an attempt to make him more comfortable, but instead he experienced severe pain. The medication he was given to relieve the pain knocked him out until evening. From time to time, he made efforts to speak to those present and then would slip back into sleep.

About 8 p.m. he began to regain consciousness, and was able to greet those around him. At 11 p.m. I was alone with him and I encouraged him to take his whole life, accepting all its imperfections and failures and give it to Jesus as an act of pure love. Joel nodded his head in agreement. Three hours later, at 2 a.m. on December 6th, he died peacefully in the arms of two of his brothers.

Joel's wake was a witness to the strength of the supernatural love that had bound him to so many others, and to the love he had spread around him. His family was amazed at the hundreds of friends, from the very young to the very old, who came to express their love and give their support, in an atmosphere of great peace.

Friday was a blustery cold day, snow alternating with rain, yet many participated in the beautiful Mass, concelebrated by eight priests.

We have only just begun to see the fruits that Joel's life and death have brought about. His example has helped others to find God and the Church, to give their time and efforts for the cause of unity for which Joel had offered. Undoubtedly, we will never know most of these fruits; but certainly the thought of Joel will continue to inspire us to "live each present moment for God," so that whatever each day may bring, we may be able to say with Joel, "I have said my 'yes'." ●

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(1) Volunteers, also called "Volunteers of God," are members of the Movement who would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit.

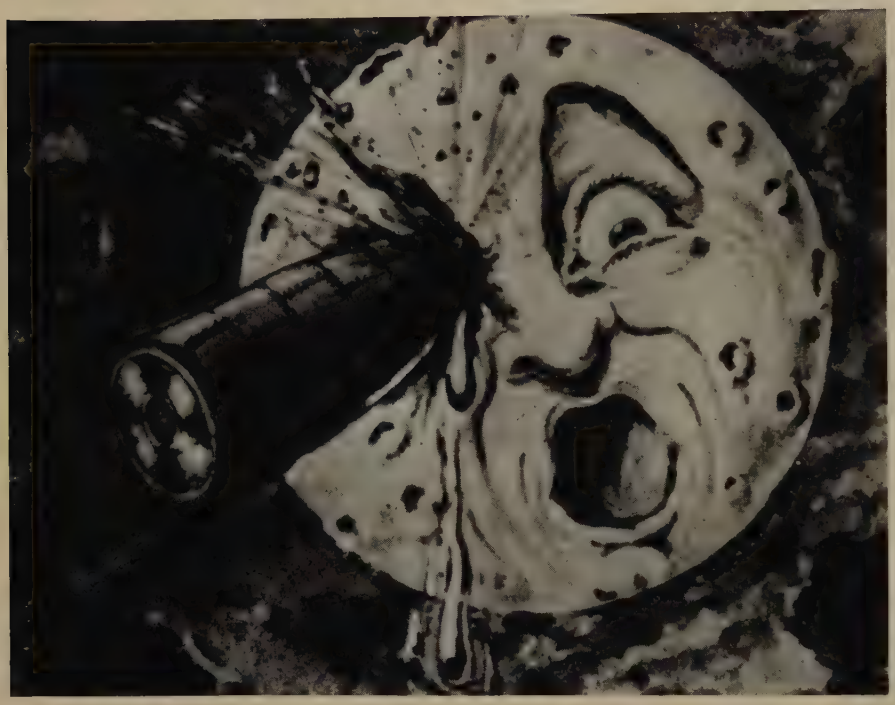
(2) A mini-Mariapolis is a day long gathering of the Focolare Movement.

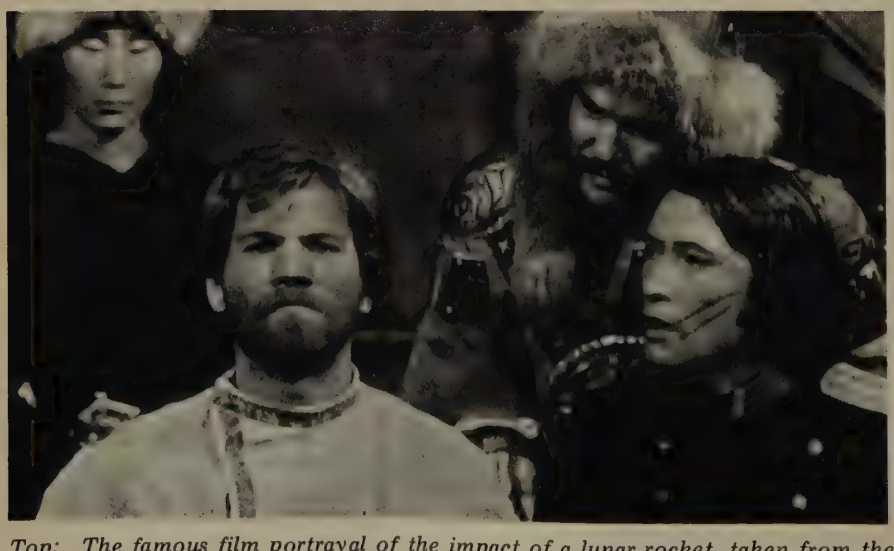
(3) Chiara Lubich is the foundress and president of the Movement.

(4) Jesus, when on the cross, cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

On an extraordinary voyage with Jules Verne

by Oreste Paliotti





Top: The famous film portrayal of the impact of a lunar rocket, taken from the movie "Voyage to the moon" which the director Méliès produced in 1912. He drew his inspiration from Jules Verne's book "From the earth to the moon."

Bottom: A scene from Jean Pierre Decourts' "Michael Strogoff," a televised adaption of Verne's famous novel which bears the same name.

The 19th century was a century marked by inventions, discoveries, and the industrial revolution resulting from the tremendous impact of the motor driven machine. The sciences developed with incredible speed and the widening horizons in different fields of research provoked an unlimited faith in man's ability to harness the forces of nature in order to assure for humanity an ever greater state of well-being. The "Myth of Progress" went forward. In Paris, one of the capitals of this "myth," not a day went by when the newspapers failed to mention the latest discoveries or the quarrels existing between those in favor of gas balloons and those who believed in the "heavier than air" theory; that is, when they were not commenting on the tragic end of some "quack" inventor who had attempted to fly in a winged apparatus.

As a young man in the mid 1800's, Jules Verne studied law in Paris and supplemented the family income by writing verse and drama for the theater. All the while he breathed in the electrifying Parisian atmosphere. After a few years he became completely bored with his law studies, finishing only to please his father, and he decided not to return to his native Nantes. Another career attracted him. He wanted to be a writer and what environment was more adapted to an aspiring writer than Paris?

Although he had already achieved some success as a writer, and had the encouragement of Dumas, who was like a father to him, Verne was not satisfied. He wanted to write about something "serious," preferring not to linger over topics already touched upon, while science was taking giant steps ahead into the unknown. Perhaps he was feeling once again the boyish restlessness of an eleven year old boy who, many years before, had attempted to stowaway on a steamboat bound for India only to have his plans thwarted by an angry father who grabbed him while the boat was

ll traveling the estuary of the Loire
ver. He had to make a solemn promise
his father that he would only voyage
his dreams.

It could have been this childlike long-
g for adventure which gave Verne's
rrative genius its slant towards the
eds of youngsters, with whom he felt
deep affinity. A number of years went
before his talent showed itself for
hat it really was. These were years of
ovitiate," of preparation, during which
wrote a few novels. He traveled
his time real voyages!), got married
d began his family. He visited scien-
ic circles where the first flights in
lloons were planned. He made
ends among scientists, some of whom
er supervised his most adventurous
orks.

Finally in 1863, through a stroke of
ood fortune, one of his manuscripts,
ive Weeks in a Balloon, was published
Hetzel, a well-known publishing house
ith whom he signed a twenty-year con-
act. The success of his book both in
d out of France was quite striking.
hat was so fascinating in this young
riter was his way of combining fantasy
ith reality. Jules Verne, whose name is
miliar to us all, had come into his own
a writer. *Extraordinary Voyages*, his
mplete works after almost forty years
prolific writing was enthusiastically
ceived. The dominant theme in all of
s novels was geography. For this rea-
n the series was entitled, *Voyages*.
here were, however, many other ele-
ents historical, scientific, ethnic, fan-
stic, sentimental, humoristic and cari-
atural combined with a very refined
t. Almost no area of the globe escaped
e restless and attentive scrutiny of
erne. His eagerness for scientific ad-
enture urged his heroes into the depths
f the seas and the outer reaches of
pace. The world explored in his fan-
stic itinerary, which was unfolded in
ore than eighty books, provided an in-
ght into the background for the under-
kings and the enormous capacities of
odern man. It was a world capable of
ourishing if human energies were used
r the good of all. From the begin-
ng, however, these energies were threat-
ed by adverse and sometimes destruc-
ve influences. Man, on the brink of
e unpredictable 20th century, was
ften surrounded by exceptional exper-
nces. Even though most of his novels
d happy endings, one cannot ignore the
e fact that along with pages filled with
thusiasm and vivid, healthy images of
e world, there were also pages in which
erne described, with equal mastery,
e harm that could be wrought by
ience and technology, in the not too
distant future, if men were to lose con-
trol over them.

In the course of the "Voyage," which Verne invited us to take, what was most striking was the progressive separation between the initial simple and easy-going vision of the 1800's and the more complex vision of reality due to the rapid transformation taking place between the 1800's and the 1900's. It was a transformation that brought with it the consequent crisis in traditional values.

Would the *Extraordinary Voyages* end in tragedy? Jules Verne did not risk proposing solutions. Instead he put forth a basic call for life, experience, for what was real, and he looked to the future with trust.

It showed what kind of person he was that, in spite of painful family circumstances, and his advancing age, he remained youthful in his thinking. Verne's optimism was rooted in his faith in humanity, a humanity which came into light with the industrial revolution. This humanity seemed to him to be eternally youthful, and full of promise, yet fragile and in need of guidance to channel well the exuberance of its energies.

Perhaps the reason for this can be attributed to his faithfulness to "his" public, the young, without whom, he once said, "I would not know how to do anything worthwhile."

●February 8, 1828. Jules Verne was borne in Nantes, France into an upper middle class family.

●1848. He completed his studies in Paris where he decided to remain in order to pursue a literary career. His first works received good reviews from the critics.

●1857. He married a wealthy widow and obtained a position as a stockbroker which allowed him time to continue writing.

●1863. With the publication of his *Five Weeks in a Balloon* he began a long collaboration with a well-known publishing firm, owned by his good friend, Hetzel.

●1866. He rented a small house in Le Crotoy on the English Channel and acquired a boat, the "Saint Michel." He wrote almost all of his well-known novels aboard the "Saint Michel."

●1870-71. He took part in the Franco-Prussian War as a commander in the Coast Guard. Embittered by the sad and painful conclusion to the conflict and burdened by family griefs he moved to Amiens, seeking refuge more than ever before in his writings.

●1872-76. He wrote his principal works: *Around the World in Eighty Days, The Mysterious Island, Michael Strogoff, The Land of Furs*, and so on. Rich, and at the height of his fame, he set sail in 1874 on his yacht making several voyages on the North Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

●1886. Sad times began. Within a few months he was shot and wounded by a hot-headed fanatic; both his mother and his good friend Hetzel died. Verne gave up his yacht and returned to Nantes for good. There he alternated between writing and working in politics as a municipal advisor in the ranks of the radicals (1889).

●March 24, 1905. Verne died at Amiens. The theater adaptions of some of his novels brought him world-wide fame. Scholars, inventors and scientists from all over the world considered him a precursor of human progress and a scientific prophet.

Who's living who?

What's happening —

Long time since I've heard ghetto talk
Long time since I've seen ghetto walk
brother, hey, you
Got a minute?
You're busy beep bopping
down the streets but
Like I said, got a minute?

Listen to
me.
No, No don't want any dope.
Just listen to
me. O.K.?

I found something: It's dynamite !
It's a LIE —
I mean what you're doing here

Oh. sorry.
didn't know you were nodding out.
Ya, maybe another time when your head's clear.
What a drag.
He doesn't even know

— why —
Am I the only one, I mean from the group
to know.

Should I say it?
Should I shout out?
Does it matter?

But it's true God exists, ya,
I'm not scared anymore.

I'm free from ghetto talk and
ghetto walk
Do you know what I mean
Where I'm coming from?
It was a prison, a game, a front
— it was me —
Thought I didn't need anyone
especially HIM.

photo: United Nations

Thought I could make it on my own.
Just ended up on a short trip to nowhere
and back,
Ya back.

Who was I jiving?
Where could I run?
Hey — it's the truth

Then I was gonna give up;
started believing nothing was for real
Looked around me and all I saw

was death, ya, my friends died, too.

drugs
poverty
Ya, kids beating each other's heads
Saw that, too.
And much more. . .

But I couldn't give up, yet.
Kind of felt there was something to it
all.

A reason — a reason for the whole mess.
God, help me tell the rest.
You answered me
Showed me that you were

LOVE and you loved me, too
for real.
That's the answer — I could do it, too.
Seemed crazy, at first, but not crazier than.
well, doesn't matter anymore.

No, no, won't say it yet
Just gonna live my life convinced of it.
Got to let you see and wonder
for yourself.

Who's jiving who?

Then you'll see that God's the deal.
the main ace.
He's LOVE, He really is.
but then
You'll see it for yourself.

Diana

The upsetting case of Billy

Here we examine a possible event of human "cloning," the asexual development of an embryo from the nucleus of a normal human cell, which raises questions of the ethical and moral limits of scientific exploration in this area.

by Piero Pasolini

Everyone has heard the news: A group of scientists, commissioned by a certain billionaire, "manufactured" a son for him. The baby named "Billy" had inherited all of his father's characteristics and only his; in other words he was an exact copy of his father. According to the majority of the scientists in the field of genetics (that branch of biology that deals with DNA and manipulations and experiemnts with DNA), in all probability there has never been a "Billy" — a human clone. However, according to the news that was announced, what supposedly took place was not so much a scientific breakthrough, but rather only a technological event following delicate microsurgery on a single human cell and human ovum.

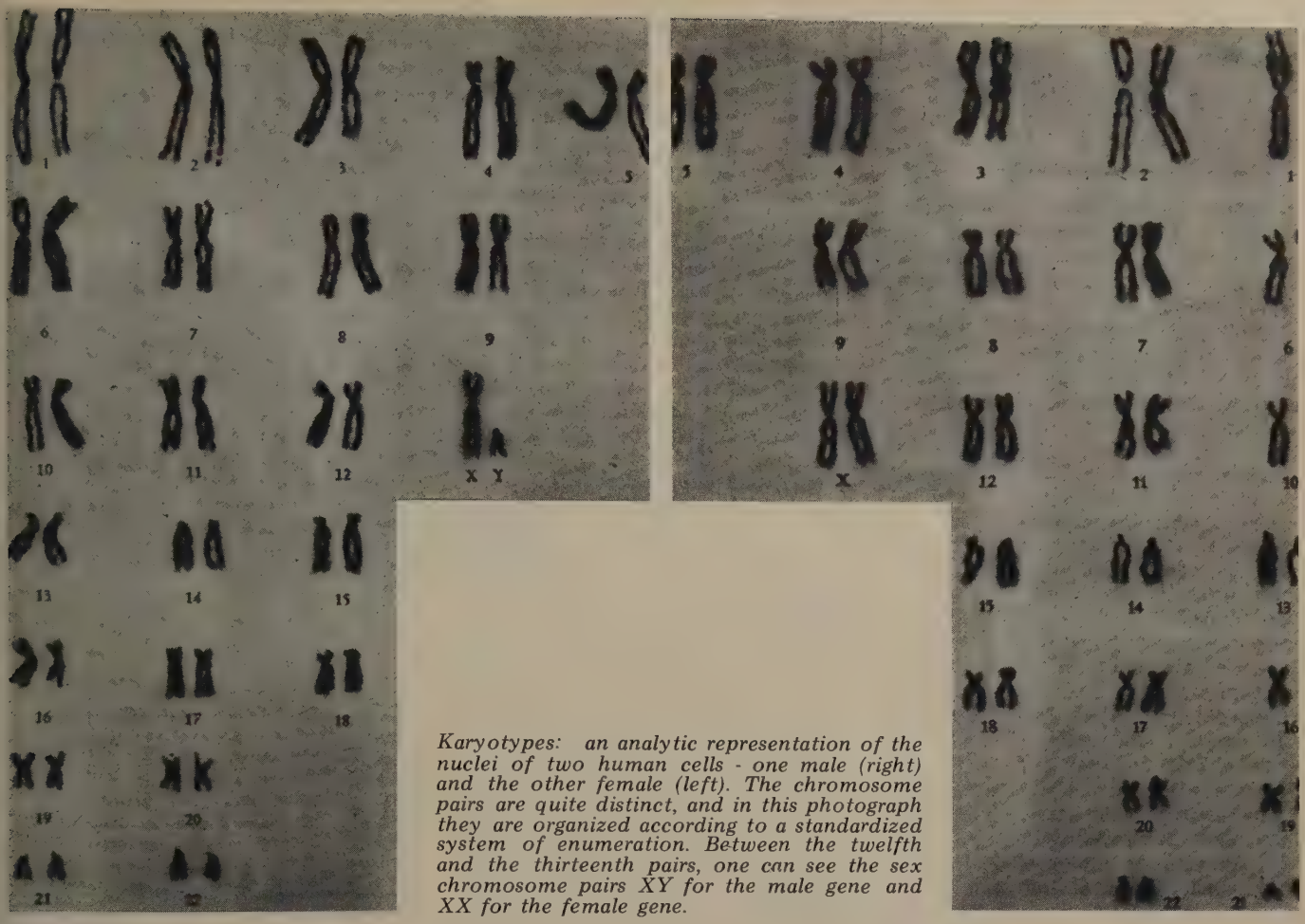
This microsurgery involved removing the entire nucleus of a mature female ovum and substituting that nucleus (which contains the DNA with the inherited characteristics of the mother) with the nucleus taken from a cell of the donor. Therefore, only the characteristics of the donor remained. This ovum with the "switched" nucleus was then implanted in the woman's uterine mucosa. At this point regular development of the ovum proceeded with the formation of the embryo and the later birth of the baby. This baby was a precise twin of his father, his exact copy, without any inherited contribution from the woman. Her job would have been only to provide the enucleated cytoplasm of the ovum and to provide the place for the development of the embryo.

We do not know if everything really happened, and in the way it was described. This operation is detailed in the recently published book *In His Image* by David Rorvik. Rorvik states that the cloning was performed and that a healthy baby was born. However, he gives no concrete way to substantiate his claims — no names are given. There were pre-publication "leaks" concerning the contents of the book which provoked scandal and discussion. These were timed to coincide with the book's release.

DNA, the genetic program, genes, genetic engineering... are all words that the reader frequently finds in newspapers and magazines. Perhaps it would be useful to explain them a little further.

Earlier it was pointed out that there is no great feat of science being described above; even if the human cloning would have really taken place, it would have been only an accomplishment of technology and a delicate piece of microsurgery. To perform the operation it is not necessary to understand DNA and its significance. Operations of this type have already been performed on simpler animals even as long ago as the 1930's before the discovery of DNA. At that time, the experiments were true scientific discoveries. They were stepping stones in the unravelling of the mysteries of heredity; secrets that were finally revealed in the DNA work.

In 1953 Crick and Watson finally were able to announce with confidence the role and the significance of DNA. DNA is the chemical substance composed practically of one large molecule (a macromolecule) in the form of a long double, or two-stranded helix which is twisted around a central line. Off the chain are four base chemicals that are repeated over and over. Each base chemical is always matched to another base



Karyotypes: an analytic representation of the nuclei of two human cells - one male (right) and the other female (left). The chromosome pairs are quite distinct, and in this photograph they are organized according to a standardized system of enumeration. Between the twelfth and the thirteenth pairs, one can see the sex chromosome pairs XY for the male gene and XX for the female gene.

chemical (but always the same one) on the other chain. Great lengths of the DNA chain are contained in the chromosomes, which are very small and are crowded within a membrane of the nucleus of the cell.

Crick and Watson discovered that the DNA contains all of the cellular program and, therefore, also the program for the development of the organism, since the organism is composed of cells. With the infinite combinations with which the four base chemicals can be positioned, three-by-three, in succession along the chain, there is written in code all the various operations that go on within the cell and outside of it. The DNA chain is "living", that is it controls itself. If it is in a suitable environment, it puts in motion a tremendously complex series of activities, which are programmed within itself.

The DNA program is subdivided into a great number of segments, called "genes". Each gene contains in itself a small program, for example, for the manufacture of a hormone, or the shape of the nose, or an emotional trait, etc. The genes, reacting to signals coming from the body of the cell (cytoplasm) emit small segments called RNA, which are copies of part of itself. These pass through the nuclear membrane and travel directly to certain small bodies present in the cytoplasm called ribosomes. At that point the synthesis of an enormous variety of chemicals takes place according to the program.

This is the mechanism by which the cells are able to manufacture the infinite number of proteins and enzymes and to stimulate all the various cellular processes. There are thousands of chemical activities, electrochemical and energy processes that are unleashed by DNA.

Every ten to twenty hours a normal cell arrives at a certain point of maturity and all its activities are oriented toward a grand event--its duplication. The DNA emits signals for the manufacture of substances which cause it to divide in two halves along its long central axis. The two strands of the DNA chain are such that each one is exactly symmetrical and complementary to the other. Gradually the two symmetrical parts separate and afterwards each one synthesizes the other half, thus reproducing two DNA chains which are complete and equal.

While forming, the new DNA chains are organized into two nuclei which travel to opposite poles of the cell, followed by a general division of the cellular material into two cells exactly equal. This system, called "mitosis" guarantees the exact duplication of the DNA in each cell. So an organism, such as a human being, develops following a precise program outlined by the DNA of the various genes. The process of differentiation, in which the cells have diverse characteristics depending on the place in the body and the function they have in the organism is also programmed within the DNA; however this mechanism is not yet understood.

The DNA is contained in a certain number of chromosomes which varies from one living species to another. For man, it is 46. An important fact to note is that in each cell the DNA is double; that is, it is present in two pairs which are equivalent, even though the genes might be in a different order. In the human cell there are 23 pairs. This doubling of chromosomes perhaps has its roots in the "sexuality" that has characterized the evolutionary process that came about at the beginning of the process of evolution of life on earth when the first unicellular forms tended to come together in an organic way.

The appearance of "sex" occurred, one could say, when two cells, or associated groups of cells, before duplicating themselves, were able to exchange part of their genetic material, that is, their DNA. Today we find this tendency even at the level of bacteria. This exchange, this mixing of the genetic program which is very similar among the different organisms, has had two effects: on one hand, the effect of making the organisms more similar, on the other hand, selecting certain inherited characteristics and favoring them. This has tended to accentuate or favor positive characteristics and lessen negative characteristics. There would be a lot to say about this topic. It is enough to remember that the "sex system" has been a fundamental factor in evolution, accelerating it and enriching it enormously.

With "sex" the organisms of each species are divided into two categories — male and female — each having a certain number of different characteristics programmed by a little piece of DNA called the "sex gene." (The female sex gene is is called the "X" chromosome and the male sex gene is the "Y" chromosome.) The sex genes determine the development of two types of individuals with some different physical characteristics that are complementary and that aid in the fusion of the genetic material of the two individuals.

To enable this to happen there are organs in the individual in which reproductive cells are produced. The cell is called the ovum in the female and the sperm in the male. These two types of cells are produced from only one pair of the DNA molecule. Each of these cells has only half the usual number of chromosomes as compared to the other cells in the body. Thus, in humans, there are 23 chromosomes in each ovum, with the entire feminine genetic program, and 23 in each sperm, with the entire masculine genetic program.

There is a great difference between the structure of the egg cell and the sperm cell. The large ovum has everything for the early development of the embryo after fertilization. There is a large amount of messenger RA bound and inactive ready to be released if fertilization should occur. Also held temporarily in an inactive state are many different organiles. The amount of nutrients for the embryo reaches a large mass of eggs when the embryo develops outside the body (as in the case of reptiles, birds, etc.) The central part of the egg is surrounded by an impermeable membrane that prevents duplication of the genetic material.

Compared to the ovum, the sperm cell is very tiny, composed of only the nucleus with the male genetic program and small structures like a "tail" that makes it extremely mobile. Sperm cells are produced by the thousands insuring a certain probability that one will impregnate the ovum. After one reaches the ovum, it attaches itself and, with a chemical reaction, is able to pierce the membrane. Only the sperm nucleus combines with the egg nucleus "fusing" the two genetic programs and creating in the case of man, a cell with 46 chromosomes (23 from the sperm and 23 from the egg). A few seconds after the the nuclear membrane is perforated, it becomes completely permeable to the nutrients and RNA that, up until that time, had been held bound and inactive. Two "poles" are formed in the cell. The impregnated cell undergoes convulsive changes. The first cellular multiplications, one should note, involve basically only the RNA already present in the ovum which comes only from the female. Only when different types of cells are produced does the newly synthesized DNA come into play.

An ovum can "divide" even if it is not fertilized. In this laboratory method the impermeable membrane is punctured or treated with acid which unleashes the action of the RNA. In the lower animals, up to the amphibians, it is possible to obtain complete individuals using this technique. With the higher animals such as birds or mammals, the cell division stops after only two or three multiplications. A creature born from this method is a perfect copy of the mother since the original cell was the ovum, containing only the female genetic program unfertilized.

With the egg of the amphibian there have been successful experiments with "cloning." In this case this nucleus of the ovum with the feminine program is removed from the cell and it is substituted with the entire nucleus of the male (a regular 46 chromosome cell, not a 23 chromosome sex cell). Thus, all the organization of the egg is put into service multiplying the new cell. This results in an embryo which is an exact genetic duplicate — of the father. An individual produced in this way would be called a "clone". This term comes from the common technique of reproducing plants through cloning; where, instead of using a fertile seed, one plants a branch of the original plant.

Mitosis, the process of cell division. In the dark section at the center of this photograph, the concentrated mass of chromosomes is well on the way to halving and separating, drawn apart by two opposing poles. Within a few minutes, this will bring about the total division of one cell into two, each with its own store of chromosomes.

As was said at the beginning, in the thirties cloning experiments on amphibians were performed to aid in understanding the mechanisms of heredity (which were discovered later). However experiments with mammals have not been successful: the nucleus dies instantly when it is removed from the cell. It seems no one has yet been able to find the way to prevent this "death."

As we said at the beginning of this article, it is claimed that a scientist or group of eminent scientists, were able to find the way to perform this operation using a human ovum and the nucleus from a man's cell. In the scientific sphere almost no one believes this was done, even though it is admitted there are only technical difficulties that would have to be surmounted and not theoretical impossibilities.

Who would benefit from an experiment of this type? Not science because it is not a scientific problem but a technical one. Refining these techniques using animals would be a much better choice. The person benefitting even less would be the poor human clone emerging from such experiments. He would almost certainly be impaired in some ways and certainly would not be enthusiastic at having come into existence in this novel, terrible way. ●

by Mary V. Cass

A FAREWELL PARTY

It was a Tuesday morning. I had arrived at work slightly earlier than usual and glad to have the extra time to organize my plans for the day. As usual, I greeted all my friends — the receptionist, the clerks along the corridor, the other social workers. There was a very warm rapport with all of these office mates of mine, built throughout the several years we had worked together. In the beginning it had been quite difficult with some of my colleagues — to break down certain cultural and racial barriers that had separated us; now, it seemed, it was just those differences that made us enjoy one another more, and made me realize what a gift we can be for one another.

But with Jeff, our young, ambitious business manager, it was a little different. Right from the beginning, perhaps partly due to his own open and friendly nature, he was easy to get along with; sometimes we even exchanged ideas on more serious subjects...revealing that deep down Jeff had some concerns that things could be better in society.

Then Jeff got more busy; more involved in the different problems and "tensions" in the office: between his department and the social work staff, between the local office and his bosses at the main office, etc. I noticed a change in Jeff: he seemed more nervous and short-tempered, less friendly and open than before. I can remember him even saying to me once: "you have to move towards what you want, without regarding other people's feelings...". The picture of his wife that he used to talk to me about disappeared from his desk and he stopped talking about her.

As once he used to "make the rounds" and say "hello" to everyone in the morning, now he stayed in his office. We rarely came in touch with each other anymore, but when we did we disagreed on some serious points. I couldn't agree with his current philosophy of "getting to the top regardless of the means" which had begun to affect the quality of his work and the seriousness with which he did it. As much as I tried to maintain a good rapport with Jeff, reminding myself each time I had to do business with him, that "charity comes first", it became always more difficult to talk with him. In fact, I almost had to overcome myself not to avoid Jeff and to continue to go beyond his new change of attitude to maintain a rapport with him.

This morning strangely enough it was Jeff approaching me. He asked if I had a little time before the office officially opened to talk with him. Right away I saw this as an occasion to restore a better rapport with him so of course I said, "sure" and we went into the administrator's office who was out for the day.

Jeff, then, very calmly proceeded to tell me he had been extremely offended about something I had done to him. The night before an old friend of his called him saying she had met me in another office and that I had carried on a kind of "inquisition" about Jeff. Jeff became increasingly more upset as he told me this. After I recovered from the initial shock of this accusation, I remembered having met a girl the day before who had asked me about Jeff, saying that they had been schoolmates years ago. I couldn't piece all of that conversation together enough to explain to Jeff simply how it really was. It was obvious that no explanation would have helped. Jeff with all of his "professional composure" was duly upset at what he interpreted to be my "prying" into his life. At that point his assistant came in and proceeded to tell me that the same girl who had also been a classmate of hers, stated I had also asked all kinds of questions about her as well.

For a moment I was speechless; my first impulse was to become upset myself, particularly against this girl who was making these accusations, a perfect stranger to me. But then, the word of life: "To love my enemies"...came to my mind. There they were, these two disturbed individuals in front of me, that stranger.

I calmed down and offered to call their friend with them present. In this way, I thought, they would know the truth. They didn't want this. Listening further then I understood that Jeff was also taking out on me a general fear he had that the whole office was talking about his recent behavior. I was glad to be able to assure him that I had never and would never involve myself in "gossip" regarding him or anyone else.

Although this noticeably relieved Jeff, our rapport for the following days still seemed strained. I was trying to find ways to come to a complete peace when suddenly Jeff turned in his resignation. The day of his farewell party in the office came. I felt it was important for me to make a special attempt to be there and I did!

Now that he was leaving I wondered more than ever if everything had been really forgotten. I wasn't sure. I went to get my coat before going home; I noticed Jeff was still in his office finishing up. Perhaps this could be a "brother" that I may never see again. Had I loved him to the end? This thought urged me to peek into his office and wish Jeff well once more. I had barely finished speaking when Jeff looked up. He was that open and profound person I had known before. "Pray for me, okay?" he said. I could tell from his tone of voice that he knew I would. ●

WHAT MAKES THEM SO ONE?

by Anthony Lee

My family is a typical Chinese family you could find in Hong Kong. In fact, I was born in China. After a few years my whole family moved to Hong Kong, and I grew up there. There were four children in my family: one girl and three boys. My childhood was very peaceful. I don't recall any sufferings, losing any relatives — nothing. It was very beautiful in a certain way. My mother loved me very much so even though our family was not rich I was not lacking anything. My mother was always trying to satisfy me and my needs. When I was about six my mother suddenly decided to become a Christian, and I think this was a very critical point for the family and particularly for me, because from then on it seems to me that my life took a certain direction which I never imagined before. I grew up in a Christian atmosphere all the time. My mother sent me to a Catholic school, but I was young and I couldn't tell the difference between someone who was a Christian and someone who didn't know God. The fact of being in a Christian school helped me a lot. I made many good friends. I had good teachers. In a certain sense I became a good guy who goes to church on Sundays and everything, but to be really honest I didn't start having what you would call a spiritual life until very late in my teenage years;.

But I have to go back to my mother. She was and is a very nice woman. I am very grateful to her for her love, for my education and many other things. She is also a very spiritual woman. I think she began to think of becoming a Christian when she met a nun who impressed her very much because she loved everybody. We all became Christians after she did.

Many, many years later she told me something that impressed me very much. There was a time when my sister wanted to become a nun. She also had been going to a Catholic school. My mother, however, didn't want her to. So one day my mother went to a church and began to pray to Mary and to tell her, "Please don't take away my daughter. Take rather any one of the boys to work for you, to serve you." I was very impressed by this when I came to know it many years later. It seemed to me that her promise came true, that Mary took it seriously. In fact my sister didn't go to the convent, and I came to know the Focolare Movement whose real name is the "Work of Mary."

When I was growing up my life seemed quite ordinary, but it seems to me now that everything was a preparation for my future life even if I didn't realize it at the time. I remember for instance one particular incident. I was about twelve and I was in church on Sunday when I noticed a group of boys about my own age. They belonged to a youth organization. I was inclined to be quiet and stay by myself but somehow I was attracted to these young men and I wanted to join them. I asked my mother if I could and she encouraged me to do so. From then on I began to have a closer contact with God. In time, however, the group became always more like a social gathering. It was through this group that I came to know the Focolare Movement. So even though I had to go against my reserved nature to join a group like this, I can see now how God had his plans for me.

One day our group was invited to spend a weekend out of the city with some other young people. I went with them. I thought it would be nice to be in the open for a while and have fun. It was with these ideas that I left. When I arrived there I found out I was in a Gen meeting and I listened to what they were telling us. They were speaking of a life lived in accordance with the Gospel. It was a revolution which would start by changing ourselves. The two days passed very quickly. At the moment of parting we were all very excited and enthusiastic about this new thing. We went to a restaurant and spent several hours talking about it. It seemed we couldn't compare it with anything we had known before. We couldn't define it, but we tried to put into practice what we had understood. At that time there was no Focolare in Hong Kong. Once in a while the Focolarini from the Philippines would come to visit us. Also, one of our professors knew about this way of life, this effort of living the Gospel in unity. So all of us together tried to do it. It was a beautiful period in my life: full of life and full of joy. After a few months the Focolarine came to establish a Focolare in Hong Kong, so from then on I became more and more involved and tried to live this life more and more. A Gen unit was formed and I was part of it.

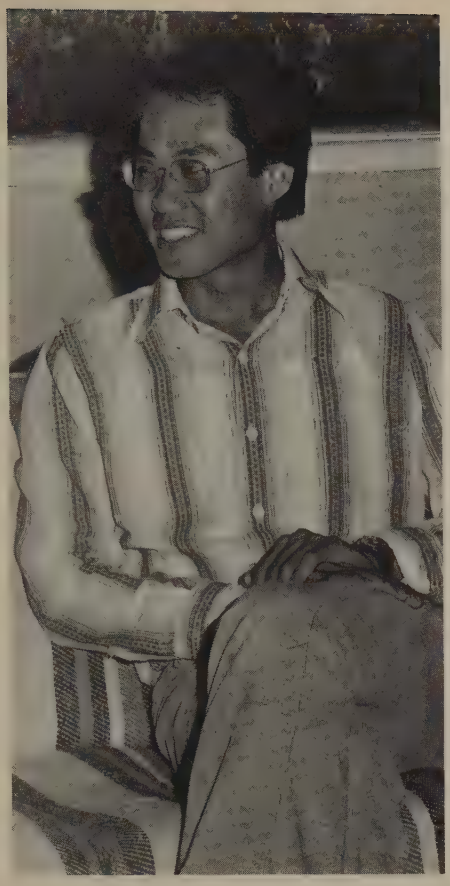
This ideal really changed my life. Before I was living for myself, but now I realized I should put God in the first place. Of course this changed completely my orientation, my way of thinking, etc. The Focolarini were all from different countries: Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Argentina. When I saw all these

people living the same Ideal, I noticed that they were always happy. I began to wonder how they could be so happy all the time and also so free. They seemed to be always available to be with me or to talk with me and the others. They loved me as I had never felt loved before. They were really listening to me.

When I came to the U.S. a year and a half after I met the Focolare, I found the Focolarini to be the same as the ones I had met in Hong Kong and I asked myself: "What makes them like this, what makes them so one?" Later on I realized this is because they have the same ideal — God — and in God we are one.

I knew that to be consistent with what I had understood I had to make some drastic changes in my life. I remember that one of the first things I tried to do was to change my relationship with my father. With my mother it had always been easy to talk, but it was difficult to be with my father, to talk with him. There was no dialogue between us. I would just ask him for permission to do this or that, and he would say "go ahead," and that would be it. Now I realized I had to change my attitude toward him and love him concretely. He used to work very late and get up late in the morning. I began to set the table and prepare the breakfast for him before going to school. In the beginning he didn't say anything but I wanted to love without expecting anything back. After a while, however, he started showing his love for me. He would ask me how I felt, would I like to take a walk with him and so on. Little by little, our relationship changed greatly. A few years later I left home; by then I knew how much my father loved me. My brother also confided to me that my father had felt loved by me.

The life of the Gospel also lead me to change my attitude toward my friends in school. I remember one very strong experience. At the beginning I didn't know how to love, so I would stay with the boys I liked and try to love them and to communicate my new discovery to them. It was quite easy because humanly speaking we were quite similar. But there was one boy I didn't like very much. The way he did things would irritate me a lot. I realized that I had to love him also, but I didn't know how to approach him. I had nothing in common with him. Whenever he asked me to do something for him, I tried to do it the best I could, but that was all. He seemed to show no response. After a year or so, before we left school, he came to me and thanked me for loving him. That day I realized that by loving all, even those you don't like, you can establish a deep relationship with everyone. I realized that when our love is universal, it can change the whole world.



Now I am living in one of the Focolare Centers in New York City. I can say that this ideal is everything for me. It has given me a new dimension of life. I used to be dissatisfied with our society. Sometimes I felt bad because of my failures. Now I know that everything depends on me. For example, when I am coming home on the subway on a Friday evening and everyone is tired and looking sad, and I am tired, too, at first all seems to be dark. Then I realize that if I change my attitude, not judging the people I see, everything changes. I begin to see what is positive. I notice maybe a mother caring for her child, someone smiling... I also understood that I have to be the first one to love and that I must remain in the present. To fully live each present moment is like a golden key to me since I met the Focolare spirituality. It really puts me into the way of doing things at the right time. Before, I would worry about what to do in the future and wouldn't be able to do my best in the present. Now I try to do everything for Jesus in the present moment. The whole day is like a prayer, a continual offering of all to Jesus. When I walk out of the house to go to school I say, "I am doing this for you, Jesus," when I am in school listening to the professors, I say, "I do this for you, Jesus." Everything becomes a dialogue with him. When I come home, before I go to bed, I examine myself on how I have lived my day. If I have lived in the present, each moment for Jesus, the whole day seems to be full, almost like a package.

This is a new life for me and it is beautiful, it is like a springtime. Also, life is an adventure if I live the present moment. I don't know what the next moment will bring, but I am always ready to live whatever will come. I know for sure that there will be the love of God.

Sometimes I am doing my homework and the phone rings. I have to jump into a new reality, but nothing really changes if I was studying for Jesus and now I answer the phone for him.

I like my life very much. I feel I will never get tired, and I will always feel young, because I am and will be only the age of that present moment. ●

"This is a new life for me and it is beautiful, it is like a springtime."

FAMILY LIFE

NEVER OUTDONE IN GENEROSITY

Weakened family life is one of the greatest social ills of our time.
The "New Family" Movement has as its aim to bring the Focolare spirit of unity into family life, so that each family will be deeply united within itself and with other families.

Last week Leon and I and our five year old son Eric went to California. We are thinking of moving and went for four days to look at different areas, check the schools and houses, and also Leon had a job interview. We had very little time to fit all this in. We arrived late Friday night, and Saturday morning I woke up all ready to conquer the state of California and wanted to really get an early start. I would have liked a quick cup of coffee and to run out the door. My family and the friends we were staying with, however, decided they wanted pancakes. I knew between cooking and dishes it could be hours. Then I remembered that everything would pass away and all that would remain is the love we have for one another. If I were to die in that moment God wasn't going to ask me how I liked California. I lost my ideas, which is very difficult for me, and began to love. I set the table for Jesus in my brothers. I remained in the present moment forgetting about where I thought we should be, and loved moment by moment. In fact, we never accomplished anything at all that day, but in the evening I was so joyful because I had loved all the way to the end.

On Monday Leon had a job interview and he wanted Eric and me to go with him in order to visit some friends in Los Angeles after his interview. I didn't like the idea because I didn't want to take an hours drive and then have to sit in the car and wait with Eric for what could be a long period of time. I thought he was really being inconsiderate even expecting this of me. Then I remembered the word of life, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Mt. 7: 12), and I tried to really cooperate with his plans. We all went to the Airport cargo area where Leon had the appointment. Eric is a very active child and not easily amused. He is hardly the type of child who can sit for a few hours in a car. We were waiting only fifteen minutes or so and already I had had it. So I thought of a good idea. I would drive to a shopping center and pass some time and come back for Leon. Leon had parked the car against a wall. Just then two big ten wheeler trucks pulled in on either side of me and behind me, and the drivers disappeared as fast as they came in. Eric and I were stuck now in this position and unable to move the car. It was very hot in the car and Eric was bouncing back and forth from the front to the back seat asking every other minute, "When is daddy coming out?" I was beginning to lose my temper with Eric who would not sit still. Again the word of life came to mind, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." I then saw Eric with new eyes and realized I had to love Jesus in him. Love conquered him and he calmed down. When Leon came out almost an hour and a half later, I was ready to listen to his experience of his interview. Just as my husband came to the car the truck drivers pulled out.

○

Our oldest boy went on a skiing trip with his school. During the weekend we had very dangerous weather conditions. The night he was due home, electric lines were down and all the roads were iced. Fear began to creep in. I knew my worrying would not do any good. Through this ideal of life I have learned that every suffering is an encounter with Jesus and that it makes me similar to him in his suffering. So immediately I said my yes and entrusted my son to God. I saw the only way to help my son was to remain in God, in his will for me in the present moment. For me it was to prepare dinner for my husband and our other children. I wanted to really love even more intensely and love well.

decided to even bake a cake. I was uncertain about how this day would end, but I was sure that if I lived it moment by moment God would meet me in each moment with all the grace I would need for whatever was his will. I became unaware of time, and peace filled my soul. Just as I was about to serve dinner a knock came to the door and it was my son, home several hours earlier than expected. God can't be outdone in generosity. I really received the hundredfold.

R. D.

I work at the airport in the cargo area of a big airline. Part of my job is to make sure everything is done in the correct way, keeping in mind that the truck drivers who deal with us should be satisfied with our service. This one day a driver was complaining that he had been waiting for over two hours to get his freight. He said other people came after him and were being helped first. He used abusive language and almost had a fight with one of our agents. I could see that the truck driver was annoyed and our agent didn't really want to help him in the proper manner. I could have told the agent to help the driver but I could see they would have only aggravated each other. I went over and tried to talk to the driver and explain how busy we were, but all he did was continue to curse and complain about our terrible company. His attitude was making me become hostile and I felt like saying he had to wait and that's that. I now had a choice to make; I could let my old nature come out, or try and love this man and remain in the will of God loving my brother. As I began to talk to him I realized a little concern on my part could straighten out the whole situation. I asked him where his papers were for the freight he was picking up, and knew by looking at them that I could have done it within five minutes. I told him I personally would get his freight and he would be out in no time at all. The boxes he was getting were too big for one man to handle. I helped him load his truck without him asking me to. After he signed the paper that he had received the freight, he apologized for his language and thanked me for helping him. He explained he was in a hurry because he had to go into the city which he didn't like. I could see the fruit of living the Gospel, seeing Jesus in my brother, because all his hostilities had vanished.

○

Another experience I had was when I was coaching a football team of children between ten and eleven. We had this one boy who didn't seem to try much but we knew he had potential. The other coaches and I would yell at him for not trying and he would do worse than before. All of us gave up on him and only played him when necessary. My attitude was "win at any cost," because good coaches are the ones who win. One day we were talking about the boy and I found out that his home life was terrible. I became annoyed with myself for not reaching out to him. I couldn't change what I had done wrong but I could try to love now. So instead of yelling at him for his mistakes I tried to praise him for the right things he did. I tried to talk to him more and develop a friendship. The less he was yelled at, the better he began to play. Through this boy I found out winning isn't everything; it's nice, but the boys themselves are the most important thing because Jesus lives in them.

L. D.

My parents bought me a new bicycle for my birthday. The next day I was really eager to ride it. I was all set to go when my mother asked me to help wash the floors. I was thinking only of riding my bike. Then I saw Jesus in her and said "Yes." When I was finished, my mom came to ask me something else. She asked me to do two errands for her. I did them on my bike and this was the hundredfold.

L. D.jr.

OUR HANDICAPPED DAUGHTER

My husband is a construction worker. We live in the suburbs of a large city. My parents handed down their faith in God to me. I believe in God; in fact, my husband and I have tried to build our family on this faith accepting everything that God would send our way. We went ahead like this until our fourth child was born. Then, I remember that we started questioning whether or not we wanted to continue along the same line.

That summer I went on vacation with the children. One day while we were out walking I met another mother who was also pushing a baby stroller. The children smiled at each other and we exchanged greetings and talked for a while. We became friends.

I began to realize how deeply I had been questioning my values which were being influenced by public opinion that said large families are a burden. The serenity I saw in that woman, however, and the fact that she had a larger family than mine, gave me the certainty that every child was a gift to be welcomed even if in the spirit of responsible fatherhood and motherhood.

My new friend encouraged me to live the life of the Gospel that she and many others were trying to live. My children, growing up in this atmosphere of love, very often commented on how nice it was to be a part of our family.

This new dimension began to permeate all of my life. At this point, I found out that I was expecting again. My husband's job was uncertain and so money was tight; the children were often sick. It was also a time when my mother could not help me and I missed her moral support. Everything seemed to say that this child would be a burden.

The atmosphere of love that existed among us, however, helped me to overcome my doubts. I understood that God had trust in me and he was giving me a new life for which I would be responsible from the first moment.

While I was awaiting the birth of the baby, I met a woman who shared with me the sense of rebellion she was experiencing because she was expecting her third child. She was considering an abortion. I felt I could only listen to her in that moment. She heard, however, that I was expecting a baby, too. Later on she told me that seeing me so calm and serene she thought, "Well, if she can make it having a large family, I would really be absurd not to accept this third baby."

The time for delivery came. We were all looking forward to it with joy. Clare was born and it was a celebration for all. However, when it came time to leave the hospital, the doctor told me that the baby was mongoloid and had a heart defect.

I found myself saying, "Yes, Jesus, also this is a gift." When I returned home, my husband and I made a pact to keep this suffering for ourselves as Mary had done when she "treasured all these things in her heart." We wanted to give our children only the light and the love that came from embracing this suffering.

Then began the numerous visits to doctors, the hospital stays and the doctor's words resounding ever so strong, "She might make it and then again, she might not."

I remembered that two thousand years before another mother had lived with this same suspense. The prophesies had said that her son had to die. She knew neither the day nor the hour. I found her to be my mother as never before. Only with her help did I find the strength to go ahead. Little Clare was certainly a gift, both for our family as well as for those who took care of her during her sixteen months of life.

I remember during one of her hospital stays, I had some dealings with the doctor who was the chief of staff and whom everyone feared. He was a stern and hard man who did not believe in God. He was quite different, however, in his dealings with me; he would even come personally to give me news about the baby. One of the nurses told me, "Up until now I always considered working in the hospital as a job, but after taking care of this child, I've come to realize that life is a gift. Every sick child is Jesus who is suffering. If I stop, at least once during the day, at one of their little cribs with this thought in mind, then it is not just a job, it becomes prayer, too.

Months passed. Surgery had to be done. Knowing that this baby was a gift from God, I was ready, if he wanted, to give her back to him forever. Notwithstanding all the attempts of science, his will was just that. Now, from paradise little Clare is constantly reminding us that God is Love and only he is the author of life. And yes, that also a handicapped child can be a gift as Clare has been for us.

M. F.

AN UNEXPLAINABLE JOY

Recently we had another baby in our family. Both my husband and I consider each of our children a precious gift. This time though was different for me, since I have made a deeper choice of God in my life. I try to live each moment for him, doing only his will.

I had a good pregnancy and really felt very well until the last two or three weeks. Trying to live only the present moment, for Jesus, helped me to see more clearly when I should do some cleaning and when I should rest, for example: when I became tired, irritable and uncomfortable, it was an opportunity to embrace the suffering, and encounter Jesus who had suffered everything, Of course I failed many times, but I knew that each moment I had a chance to start again, and this helped me a lot.

The hardest thing for me was labor. It was especially long, all night on Thursday, until late Friday night. There were times when I felt like giving up but living each moment for Jesus is too much a part of my life now, and I couldn't. I felt very close to Mary and Jesus Forsaken during those long hours. Also, the unity with my husband, with all the others, who, I knew were praying for me, was such a strong reality that I never felt alone.

At 11p.m. our little one finally came. When they laid him beside me I felt as if all the small difficulties in each of those moments of the previous weeks were meant for this one moment of unexplainable joy! This was God's plan, all of it is so awesome. His creation, new life and that whole time of grace carrying the child and giving birth seemed to me like passing from death to resurrection.

J. S.

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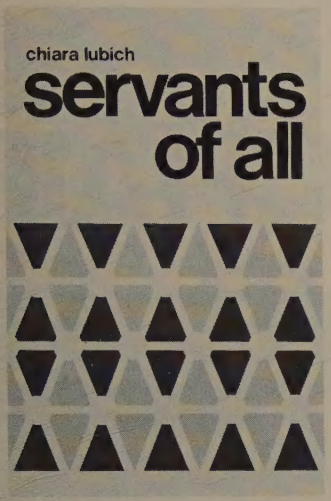

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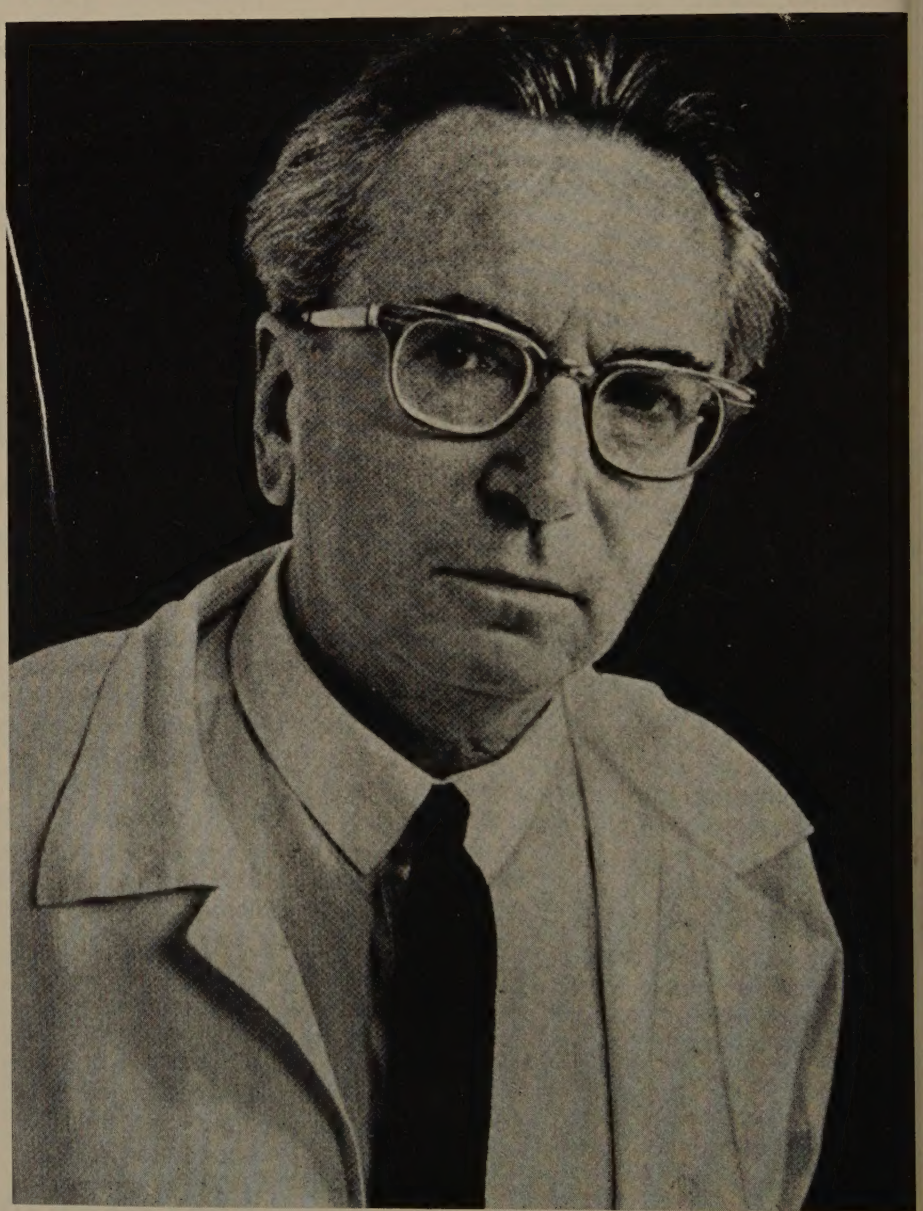
by Eugene Fizzotti

It was in the Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz that Frankl, founder of logotherapy, found his theories confirmed. His theories were based on a spiritual interpretation of the lessons of Freud.

FRANKL'S ARMCHAIR



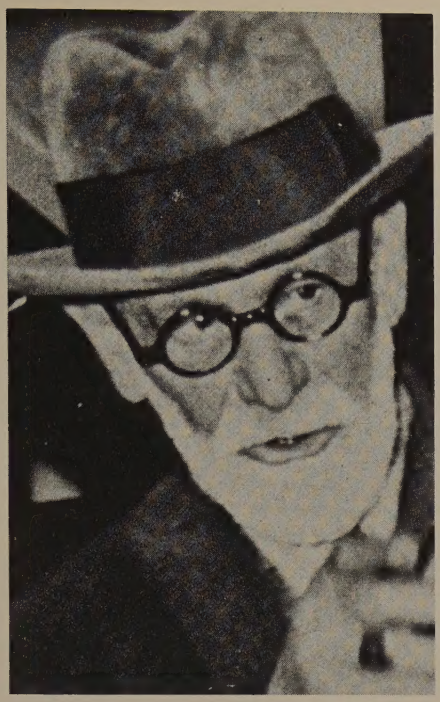
In the course of his study of human psychology, Sigmund Freud stated the principle that our behavior now is determined by things that happened to us during our infancy. This means that we are forced to live in the past, following a pattern determined when we were babies.

Many psychiatrists today are doubtful about Freud's theories, and they have found new ways of treating depression and neurosis, ways which are more consistent with human nature and which correspond more closely to this period in history. One of the most distinguished of these is Victor E. Frankl, a professor at the University of Vienna. He is concerned with man's future, trying to help him to see the real meaning of his life, the reason for his existence. By these means, he helps to eliminate the sort of distress which brings about depression and neurosis.

Frankl is the founder of a new school of psychiatry known as "logotherapy." Many regard him as the greatest interpreter of Freudian theory in its spiritual sense. Logotherapy is a treatment directed towards the purpose, meaning and understanding of life.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate the difference between psychoanalysis and logotherapy, would be to recall an incident that happened to Frankl recently, which he recalls with humor: An American psychoanalyst visiting Vienna put this question to Frankl, "What is the difference between psychoanalysis and logotherapy?" Frankl turned the question back on him, asking what, in his opinion, was the essence of psychoanalysis. The American replied, using Freud's own words, saying that, "during psychoanalysis the patient lies on a couch and

t: Sigmund Freud



has to tell the psychoanalyst things which are sometimes very painful and distasteful to say." Frankl continued ironically, "On the other hand, in the office of the logotherapist, the patient remains comfortably seated in an armchair, but he must listen to things which are not always pleasing to hear."

Although he was speaking with irony, Frankl wanted to emphasize that the logotherapist has no doubt that his task is to make his patient face up to his responsibility for bringing to completion the tasks which life has entrusted to him.

Search for meaning

In a letter to Marie Bonaparte, Freud wrote, "When a person begins to ask himself questions about the purpose and meaning of life, that person is sick." Frankl will have none of this. "If that were so," he says, "the vast majority of men would be seriously sick. The despair of a man confronted with the apparent absurdity of his own life is not at all pathological, nor is it a mental illness. It is rather a situation of human anguish. So, far from being an illness, it seems to me to be a sign that one is really a man. An animal does not reflect on the meaning of his life. On the other hand, it is natural for man to look into himself in search of meaning. Consequently, I regard this "search for meaning" as the major motivational force in man. However, this search for meaning is frequently frustrated.

"In the past, a man who lost all sense of meaning in his life went to his priest, his rabbi or his pastor. Now, instead, he goes to his doctor. We psychiatrists find ourselves faced with an existential problem which has long been hidden. For these reasons I firmly believe in a rehumanized psychotherapy which treats man in all dimensions, including the spiritual."

Such feelings that our lives are empty of anything worthwhile are produced by what Freud's successors call "existential emptiness." This is a state of crisis, and conflict which comes about when a man is uncommitted, empty and inert. Under such conditions, anxiety, bitterness, mistrust, doubt and anguish enter a man. Sometimes the problem disappears when he takes up a task, but if the problem is not adequately resolved it will return, sooner or later, in a more intense form. In this state of mind a man begins to ask himself with ever increasing insistence, "Why do I go on living. What meaning is there to my life? What value is there to all the things I do?"

Thousands of people ask these questions every day. It is not something new. It has happened in the past and will continue to happen, therefore, it is not something transient and does not belong to a particular period in history. Rather, it is a sign of incipient neurosis; in fact this distress can cause such conflict with reality and with oneself as to bring on permanent depression.

Is it possible to dam the flood of existential emptiness? Can one do anything to cure neuroses of this sort? According to Frankl, a great deal can be done. It is the very aim of logotherapy to contribute to the rehumanization of men in this anguished state, helping them to rediscover their lost sense of purpose.

To those who are familiar with the voluminous works of Frankl, recalling his time in concentration camp will not seem out of place. It was there, in a place of human degradation and torment, that Frankl became convinced of those ideas which had come to him, by intuition, in the preceding years. If he promised himself that he would never "run to the wire," that is, sink into despair to the point of committing sui-

: Victor Frankl

or Frankl has been the director of Department of Neurology at the clinic of Vienna since 1946. He is president of the Austrian Medical ety of Psychotherapists; he is a essor of psychiatry and neurology he University of Vienna, and he cts the Institute of Logotherapy at University of San Diego in California. ddition, he has received three honor- degrees from universities in the ed States.
ince 1961 he has held conferences ver the world. He was first invited peak at Harvard University, and that time he has spoken at over different universities in Australia, a, Africa, Japan and Italy, as well the United States.
e has written 23 books, some of h have been translated into 14 uages including Japanese, Chinese, ew and Greek. Frankl's most sig- ant work *Man's Search For Meaning* literary treasure for all time. In this , which became a best seller in the ed States, (it has subsequently sold one million six hundred thousand es) he describes with great sensitivity mpressions and experiences of three s of life in a concentration camp. e he was just an ordinary prisoner, among many, Number 119,104.

cide on the high voltage wires which ran around the camp, it was only because of the gleam of hope that shone out, even in the darkness of that Nazi inferno.

Auschwitz

It was at Auschwitz that Frankl learned that there are two kinds of men and only two — the good men and the not-so-good. These two kinds are found everywhere; they penetrate and infiltrate every group. Not only this, but in addition Frankl's trust in human goodness was confirmed by the sight of innumerable prisoners who "went to the gas chambers with dignity and serenity, saying the 'Our Father' or the Hebrew prayers at the time of death." Experiences of this sort made him summon all his human and moral resources so that he could find meaning even in the life of a concentration camp. He tried to communicate an enthusiasm for struggle to his companions so that they would always have the strength to defend their own dignity, and know how to smile, even in suffering.

It was also while he was in the camp that Frankl discovered the importance of having a task, an ideal, something to live for. Only those who have a task before them to which they are committed and which is awaiting completion can find the strength to overcome ignoble and degrading situations.

Today, the benefits of logotherapy are available for everyone, for each man in his own unique and personal situation. In this very world there are millions of men who, like the prisoners of Auschwitz, ask themselves desperately if life is worth the pain of living, if it is not totally absurd and useless.

Some years ago, Frankl carried out a survey among the students at the University of Vienna. The results showed that forty percent had experienced at least once in their lives the feeling that they were living without an aim, without reason. The same survey repeated among students in the United States of America yielded eighty percent who had felt this way. In France, eighty percent of the people interviewed admitted the need to find someone who would help them to find a reason for living. So the words of Nietzche are confirmed, "He who has a reason for living can put up with any situation, no matter how disagreeable or painful."

This, then, is the principle aim of logotherapy, to help the patient find meaning in his life, a task he must accomplish, a reason for living.

Frankl sees no purpose in an abstract search for a task or for meaning. Every man lives in a particular historical situation. Every situation is a challenge for him, presenting him with a problem to be solved. Every man has his own specific calling, his own particular vocation. According to logotherapy, the essence of human life lies in responsibility, responsibility towards things, people and ideas, responsibility for one's children, parents, teachers. This responsibility is different for everyone, and it varied from situation to situation. Therefore, for the treatment of neuroses and depression the most important element is the task that each person must become involved in. The task is worth much more than money, success or pleasure.

A boomerang

During one of his many visits to Australia, Frankl was given a boomerang as a present. It was explained to him that boomerangs return to the one who threw them if, through faulty aim, he failed to hit his prey. Frankl commented: "It's just the same with a man's life. When he makes a mistake in carrying out his responsibility, he tends to turn in on himself. Basically, the best way to forget our worries is to give ourselves to others. The surest way of finding peace and joy is to do something for others, but every man must decide for himself. Man is free to build his own future, to enrich it or to deform it."

Freud's psychoanalysis is directed at man's past, investigating the processes of withdrawal and the infantile disturbances which later cause problems in sex life, dreams, etc. Frankl's logotherapy turns to the future, to the hope of bringing to completion a particular personal responsibility. One cannot resign himself to what took place in his infancy; he must be open to the possibilities of the future, to the infinite spaces waiting to be crossed by each one of us.

Man is not made only for carnal pleasure, for sexual satisfaction, or for success. He is much, much more. . . He is craving for the infinite, for the future, for tomorrow.

If the message of logotherapy is "an absolute faith in the absolute meaning of life," what message could be more relevant to our times? ●

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